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Attorney General Biden's Office announces 99-count indictment in embezzlement case

Wilmington – Attorney General Beau Biden's Office announced today that it has secured the indictment of William Hitch Jr. on 99 felony counts of theft and other charges related to his embezzlement of more than \$150,000 from the Laurel School District dating back to September, 2001.

Investigations conducted by the Delaware Department of Justice and State Auditor's Office revealed that Hitch, former Finance Director for the Laurel School District, on regular occasions over a period of eight years made unauthorized payments to himself of overtime and additional duty pay. Hitch was indicted by the Sussex County Grand Jury for theft, misusing computer information, and misuse of public information.

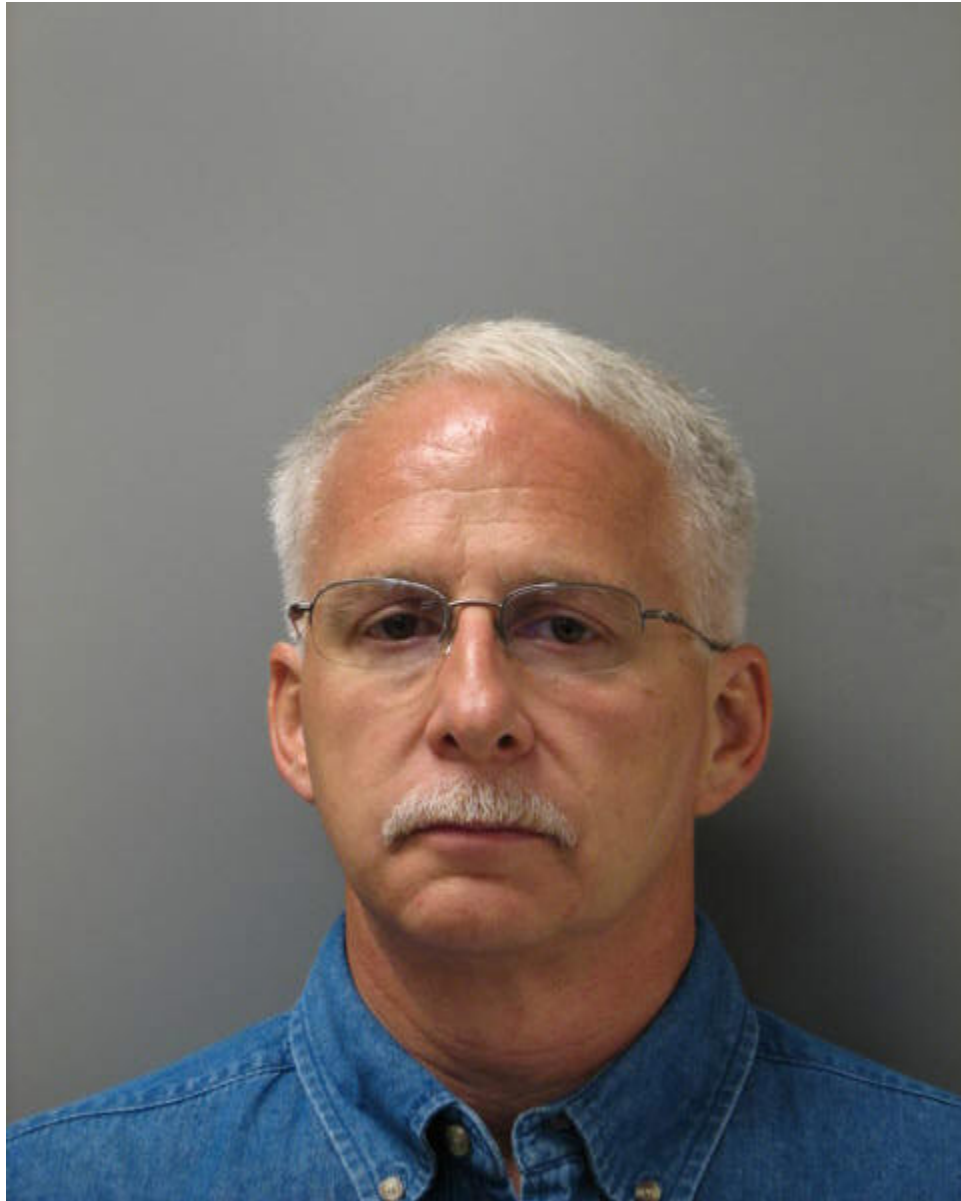
"Attorney General Biden is committed to protecting Delawareans from fraud and abuse, particularly when they are victimized by individuals who are in a position of trust," stated Timothy Mullaney, Director of the Attorney General's Fraud and Consumer Protection Division. "This defendant is charged with abusing his authority to steal from taxpayers for personal gain. We are acting to ensure that he is held accountable for his actions."

Specifically, the indictment charges Hitch with:

- 1 count of Felony Theft of \$100,000 or more
- 12 counts of Felony Misuse of Computer System Information
- 86 counts of Felony Tampering with Public Records (one for each unauthorized payment)

Hitch resigned his position from Laurel School District in December 2009. He turned himself in to Capital Police in Georgetown on June 11 and appeared before Superior Court Commissioner Alicia Howard, who set \$108,000 unsecured bail. Hitch subsequently posted bail and was released. A Case Review hearing has been scheduled for July 19, 2010.

The Delaware Department of Justice reminds the public that an indictment is merely an allegation and is not evidence of guilt. Defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a jury trial at which the state bears the burden of proving each charge beyond a reasonable doubt.



William Hitch Jr.

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